

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6056

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Agriculture & Rural Economic Development, February 22, 2007

Title: An act relating to evaluating the use of sugar beets for production of biofuel.

Brief Description: Requiring a study to evaluate the use of sugar beets for the production of biofuel.

Sponsors: Senators Clements, Rasmussen, Shin, Schoesler, Roach, Berkey and Holmquist.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture & Rural Economic Development: 2/22/07 [DP-WM].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Rasmussen, Chair; Hatfield, Vice Chair; Schoesler, Ranking Minority Member; Morton and Shin.

Staff: Bob Lee (786-7404)

Background: The successful use of cane sugar for bio-fuel production in some countries such as Brazil, combined with past production of sugar beets as a major crop in Washington State, has led to interest in examining the potential of the use of sugar beets for bio-fuel production in Washington State.

Summary of Bill: A study is to be conducted on the potential and suitability of growing sugar beets for bio-fuel production. In conducting the study, Washington State University is to consider a number of factors including:

- 1) current and potential availability of sugar beet feedstock in the state;
- 2) suitability of growing conditions in various regions of the state;
- 3) expected fuel yield per acre in relation to other potential feedstocks;
- 4) technological feasibility of converting sugar beets into fuel;
- 5) economic feasibility of growing sugar beets for production of bio-fuels;
- 6) a description of the infrastructure needed such as processing plants and machinery; and
- 7) potential contribution to rural economic development.

By December 1, 2009, Washington State University must provide a written report on its findings and conclusions.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Appropriation: \$125,000 is appropriated in each of fiscal year 2008 and 2009 from the General Fund to conduct this study.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 19, 2007.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Brazil uses 70 percent ethanol in their cars that is derived primarily from sugar cane. Sugar beets have the highest fuel yield per acre of any crop. Corn prices have gone up since ethanol production has increased in the midwest. Washington State farmers know they can successfully grow sugar beets because they used to grow thousands of acres of sugar beets to manufacture refined sugar. Sugar beet pulp makes good feed for livestock.

OTHER: The Governor has placed, in her request budget, funds for research opportunities for biofuel production to be conducted by Washington State University in cooperation with the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory located in Richland. There is a plan to conduct a broad study of biofuel opportunities for a number of crops, including cellulosic ethanol from agricultural waste products. The goal is to pursue options that can be produced for a profit and not depend on a subsidy to grow.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Clements, prime sponsor; Jack Fields, Washington Cattlemen's Association.

OTHER: Larry Ganders, Washington State University.